

# Your Daughter or Your Dog? A Feminist Assessment of the Animal Research Issue

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*I bring several ecofeminist critiques of deep ecology to bear on mainstream animal rights theories, especially on the rights and utilitarian treatments of the animal research issue. Throughout, I show how animal rights issues are feminist issues and clarify the relationship between ecofeminism and animal rights.*

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John Stuart Mill said that “every great movement must experience three stages: ridicule, discussion, adoption.”<sup>1</sup> What is popularly called the animal rights movement is a significant contemporary social movement. And while this movement continues to take its undeserved share of ridicule, it has, for the most part, advanced beyond that first stage and into the second, discussion. There is even some encouraging evidence that its recommendations are being adopted by a significant number of people who are becoming vegetarians; buying “cruelty-free” toiletries, household products and cosmetics; refusing to dissect pithed animals in biology classes or to practice surgery on dogs in medical school “dog labs”; and rethinking the status of fur.

In the academy, a busy decade or more of writing and debate has coincided with a decade of intense social activism. A vast amount of literature in this area has been written by utilitarian theorist Peter Singer, rights theorist Tom Regan, and those who are responding to them.

Singer’s and Regan’s arguments share a number of features, and I refer to those collectively as the Singer-Regan approach.<sup>2</sup> I begin by outlining this approach in section I. In section II, I draw from recent ecofeminist critiques of ecological ethics, especially of deep ecology, to explain how, similarly, the Singer-Regan approach neglects context and concrete individuals, how it overestimates the scope of principles and discounts our affective responses in moral life. In section III, I discuss the use of live animals in biomedical research.

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Researchers constantly tell us that we must choose between “us” (human beings) and “them” (animals), between our daughters and our dogs. They tell us it is either medical progress via the current, virtually unchecked rate and standards of animal sacrifice, or else a return to the Dark Ages. I think that both this characterization *and* the Singer-Regan characterization of the issue are dangerously misleading, for reasons I explain in that section. Throughout the paper, I try to make clear why animal rights issues, including the research one, are feminist issues, and I will make clearer the connections between some recent ecofeminist work and animal rights issues.<sup>3</sup>

I want to say that I have the utmost respect for both Singer and Regan as committed and inspiring activists and as academicians who have worked very hard to give these issues credibility in a discipline disposed toward dismissing them either as nonissues or as “pop” philosophy. Even though our scholarship differs, what we ultimately hope to accomplish for the several billion animals who are destroyed on this planet each year by and for the sake of human beings is the same.

## I.

Singer and Regan question traditional criteria that are offered as necessary and sufficient conditions for an entity’s being owed moral consideration—moral personality, an ability to enjoy the “higher” pleasures—on the grounds that such criteria exclude certain human “marginal” cases, e.g., infants, the severely mentally disabled, the very senile, and the comatose. Their approach is to search for what R.G. Frey (1980) has called a “lowest common denominator,” a capacity or characteristic that is common to both the “normal” and the problematic human cases. The criterion they settle on is the capacity to have “interests.”

Singer and Regan give basically the same account of these interests. In *The Case for Animal Rights*, Regan argues that at least mammalian animals, one year old or older, have both “preference” and “welfare” interests, which can be either frustrated or enhanced. By “preference” interests, Regan means “those things that an individual is *interested* in, those things he likes, desires, wants or, in a word, prefers having, or, contrariwise, those things he dislikes, wants to avoid or, in a word, prefers not having” (Regan 1983, 87). By “welfare” interests, he means those things that are *in* an individual’s interests, something that would benefit an individual (Regan 1983, 88). Of course an individual may or may not be interested in what is in that individual’s interests.

Wishing to avoid the problem of so-called marginal cases, Regan says that individuals with preference interests have inherent value and that this value is marked by certain minimal rights, the most basic of which is the right to “treatment that is respectful of the kind of value they have, and all are owed this treatment equally; in particular, individuals who have inherent value are not to be treated as if they were mere ‘receptacles’ of valuable experiences”

(Regan 1983, 277).<sup>4</sup> Singer says that sentient beings have interests, much like Regan's preference interests, in, at least, avoiding painful experiences and acquiring pleasurable ones. Possessing such interests entitles an individual to have those interests given due weight in a utilitarian calculation.

As many critics have noted, a great deal hinges on the lowest common denominator argument, an argument that appeals to the rationalist's penchant for parsimony and logical consistency. It insists that we choose an essential—that is, a necessary and sufficient—criterion of moral considerableness and that we apply it consistently to bring a vast array of both human and nonhumans equally into the moral fold. Failure to give animals the moral consideration they are due is “speciesist,” a moral wrong similar to racism and sexism. To paraphrase Singer, speciesism is an irrational bias toward members of one's own species and against members of other species (Singer 1977, 7).

According to Singer, a utilitarian calculation of both the animal and human pleasures and sufferings that result from such practices as flesh eating, product testing, biomedical research and education, and recreational hunting will in the vast majority of cases weigh in favor of the animals. According to Regan, these various practices violate an animal's right to respectful treatment, that is, we do not treat them in ways consistent with the recognition of their equal possession of inherent value. Instead, we treat them as receptacles of intrinsic value (e.g., pleasure), lacking any value of their own.

## II.

Singer's and Regan's arguments are recognizable offshoots of what some feminists, following Carol Gilligan's analysis (1982), call the “justice tradition” in moral and political philosophy.<sup>5</sup> Here, I will focus on how such theories misrepresent our moral relations with animals rather than with other human beings.

### 1. ESSENTIALISM

Singer and Regan, like their mentors the utilitarians and Kant, respectively, have an “essentialist” view of the moral worth of both human beings and animals. This means that they propose a single capacity—the possession of interests—for being owed moral consideration. It is clear that they believe this condition is a sufficient one for being owed such consideration. And while they do not say specifically that possessing such interests is *necessary*, Singer and Regan *treat* the possession of preference interests as a necessary condition. For example, the lowest common denominator argument, which is central to their respective attempts to bring animals into the moral fold equally with human beings, is sound only if possessing interests is treated as necessary. Both writers say that those who do not possess interests are, at best, problematic.

And both Singer and Regan condone sacrificing those without interests for the sake of those who do possess them.<sup>6</sup>

Essentialism is objectionable for a number of reasons. First, it renders inessential and unimportant certain relationships—familial relationships or friendships, for example—that do seem essential and important to many of the rest of us (Francis and Norman 1978). Second, as some feminist writers have noted, essentialism strips an individual of his or her “specific history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution” (Walker 1989, 18). Specifically, animal rights theories reduce individuals to that atomistic bundle of interests that the justice tradition recognizes as the basis for moral considerableness. In effect, animals are represented as beings with the *kind of capacity* that human beings most fully possess and deem valuable for living a full *human* life.

Several ecofeminists, including Marti Kheel (1985), Jim Cheney (1987), and Karen Warren (1990), have noted something very much like essentialism, or at least a certain arrogance underlying essentialism, in the environmental ethics literature, especially among deep ecologists.<sup>7</sup> Both Kheel and Warren show how such arrogance leads to hierarchical and dualistic thinking. Jim Cheney agrees with Ariel Kay Salleh who claims that, as Cheney puts it, attempts by deep ecologists “to overcome human (really masculine) alienation from nature fail in the end because they are unable to overcome a masculine sense of the self and the kinds of ethical theory that go along with this sense of self” (Cheney 1987, 121). I agree with Cheney, who points out that some deep ecologists fail to recognize and respect the integrity of the “other,” of animals and nonsentient nature, when they describe their relationship to nature in terms of nature being a part of *them*, when they merely expand “the self to *include* that in relationship to which it feels alienated” (Cheney 1987, 121). Cheney describes this metaphorically as a “megalomaniacal pond sucking up all the water of the world and becoming itself an ocean” (Cheney 1987, 124).

In contrast to this “megalomaniacal” view, as Karen Warren discusses her first rock-climbing experiences she compares a potentially “arrogant” relationship with the rock—as invasive, as conqueror, as coercive—with a climber’s “loving” relationship. She says of the latter:

One recognizes the rock as something very different, something perhaps totally indifferent to one’s own presence, and finds in that difference joyous occasion for celebration. One knows “the boundary of the self,” where the self—the “I,” the climber—leaves off and the rock begins. There is no fusion of two into one, but a complement of two entities *acknowledged* as separate, different, independent, yet *in relationship*; they are in relationship *if only* because the loving eye is perceiving it, responding to it, noticing it, attending to it (Warren 1990, 137).

Singer and Regan extend the moral community to include animals on the basis of sameness. They do not acknowledge, much less celebrate, differences between humans and other animals. This sort of self-centric importance, this assimilation of the other into the sameness of self, the “fusion of two into one” and the “erasure of difference,” as Warren puts it, is central to the concept of arrogance that Marilyn Frye (1983) and Iris Murdoch (1970) have previously articulated.

Warren’s loving attention to the rock’s difference, independence, indifference did not result in her antipathy or moral apathy with regard to the rock. Instead, she says, “I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude for what it offered me—a chance to know myself and the rock differently, to appreciate unforeseen miracles like the tiny flowers growing in the even tinier cracks in the rock’s surface, and to come to know a sense of *being in relationship* with the natural environment. . . . I felt myself *caring* for this rock” (Warren 1990, 135).

There is no reason why animals’ differences, independence, indifference cannot be grounds for caring, for relationships characterized by such ethically significant attitudes as respect, gratitude, compassion, fellow or sisterly feeling, and wonder. Such animal ethologists as Jane Goodall (1971) have practiced for decades what Warren (1990), who is indebted to Marilyn Frye (1983), calls “loving attention.” Goodall and other women (some of them feminist) scientists have suggested that such an attitude and its practice are not only appropriate moral attitudes with regard to the subjects they are studying but an epistemologically fruitful one as well (e.g., see Keller 1983).

Both Warren and Kheel note how arrogant essentialism re-creates moral hierarchies and dualistic thinking in ways that “establish inferiority and subordination” (Warren 1990, 129).<sup>8</sup> Marti Kheel puts the point like this: “Ironically, although many of these writers feel that they are arguing against notions of hierarchy, the vast majority simply remove one set of hierarchies only to establish another. Thus, many writers on the subject of animal liberation may raise the status of animals to a level that warrants our moral concern only to exclude other parts of nature, such as plants and trees” (Kheel 1985, 139). And there is even a pecking order among those in the upper echelons (among those who possess interests) of the hierarchy. Singer and Regan say that in dire cases, when we must choose between animal and human life, the life of the human, because it has more valuable potential experiences, takes priority.<sup>9</sup>

Central to an ecofeminist analysis of patriarchy is the claim that such value hierarchies, which categorize women, animals, and nonsentient nature on the same devalued side of the dualism, serve to oppress women along with nature in a vast array of similar ways.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, like many of the deep and certainly the “shallow” ecologists, Singer’s and Regan’s analyses do not cut deeply enough into our culture’s objectionable use of these dualistic hierarchies. In fact, their “liberation” theories only perpetuate such thinking.

## 2. CONTEXT AND PRINCIPLES

A second feature of the justice tradition that has received attention is the propensity among those working in that tradition to characterize moral situations generally and abstractly and at the expense of contextual detail. What is lost in this kind of characterization of moral life or of a moral dilemma are historical, social, economic, familial, and other details that seem crucial to an assessment of a situation, a decision, or a character. Singer and Regan give us such delimited descriptions, and these descriptions allow them to formulate general, prescriptive principles that are applicable to similarly and superficially described situations. The use of such principles is a third feature of the Singer-Regan approach that I discuss.

As noted in section I., for Singer and Regan the animal research issue and the vegetarian issue are described similarly as situations in which animals' interests, given the strict and impartial consideration they are due, override human interests in eating them or in using them as experimental subjects. And the reasons our desires are overridden—because animals' desires are stronger or their rights given priority by an adjudicatory principle of justice that we have all decided on—should be recognized as good reasons by anyone capable of following a logical inference.

At least since Gilligan, a central task of feminist moral criticism has been to assess the role, proper status, and nature of principles in moral life. Some ecofeminists have raised similar questions about principles in reviewing work by deep ecologists and in deciding whether there is a place for principles in their own theories.<sup>11</sup> It is often said that general principles are too legalistic and abstract to be helpful in resolving unique, highly context-laden, nongeneralizable situations and that a "principled morality" leaves no room for virtue and affection.<sup>12</sup> While these writers do not eschew the use of principles entirely, they do reject any morality that worships principles while neglecting such things as virtue or the affections. I agree with these writers, and I object to the way rights and utilitarian principles are often presented to us in classrooms, textbooks, and scholarly books and articles as our only "reasonable" options. This is objectionable because if these are our only options, then we must sometimes disregard what our imaginations or hearts or the simple facts are telling us, in order to articulate situations, some of them very uncooperative, in a way that fits these principles and their corresponding conceptual frameworks. Singer's and Regan's awkward attempts to articulate interspecies moral relations using these standard theories and conceptual frameworks exemplify this point.

What principles we articulate and ultimately choose to rely on are relevant to a very complex web of "beliefs, feelings, modes of expression, circumstances and more, arranged in characteristic ways and often spread out over time"

(Walker 1989, 18). In an essay on bioregional narrative, Jim Cheney suggests that we “extend these notions of context and narrative outward so as to include not just the human community, but also the land, one’s community in a larger sense.” Moreover, “for a genuinely contextualist ethic to include the land . . . the land must *speak* to us; we must stand in *relation* to it; it must *define* us, and we it” (Cheney 1989, 128-29). I should think that this concept of “the land” would entail sentient nature. And because we not only are *defined by* but also *define* this relationship—not in terms of static and essentialist necessary and sufficient conditions but in contextually rich and evolving terms—we will have opportunities to evaluate and alter aspects of the relationship when certain features of it (our arrogance and our waste, for example) are brought forcefully to our attention, and we may well want to recommend some of these alternatives universally.

Recently, Karen Warren articulated eight “boundary conditions”—necessary conditions that “delimit the territory of a piece without dictating what the interior . . . looks like”—of any feminist ethic and of any ecofeminist ethic. One of those conditions states that a feminist ethic or an ecofeminist ethic cannot be naturist—that is, cannot condone the oppressive domination of sentient and nonsentient nature—or contribute to any other “‘-ism’ which presupposes and advances a logic of domination.” Warren defines a “logic of domination” as “a structure of argumentation which leads to a justification of subordination” (Warren 1990, 128). This “logic” entails a value system that designates “subordinates” and their “inferior” characteristics or capacities. A second condition holds that any theory should be fluid, in process, changing over time, and emerging out of “concrete and alternative descriptions of ethical situations.” A third requires that feminist ethics must give a place to “values typically unnoticed, underplayed, or misrepresented in traditional ethics” and will do so while recognizing a role for traditional values (Warren 1990, 139-40).

These boundary conditions are also relevant to any critique of the animal rights literature and to attempts to reconceptualize our moral relationships with and obligations to the animals with whom Singer and Regan are concerned. I have already discussed how Singer and Regan retain an unfortunate “logic of domination” in their respective theories. Their atemporal, abstract, and acontextual characterizations of issues, of the values at stake, and of appropriate resolutions grossly oversimplify some of these highly complex issues, including, as I show in section III., the research one. Such characterizations also oversimplify our actual and potential relationships with and responses to animals, depriving us of opportunities to respond to and make responsible choices about the enormous cost to other sentient life of such intimate and routine practices involving, e.g., what we eat, the bath soap and shampoo that we use, and the pills that we take for a headache or to prevent a pregnancy.

### 3. THE AFFECTIONS

Peter Singer says that he does not “love” animals, that he has “argued” his case, “appealing to reason rather than to emotion or sentiment . . . because reason is more universal and more compelling in its appeal” (Singer 1977, 255). Regan says that we should make “a concerted effort not to indulge our emotions or parade our sentiments. And that requires making a sustained commitment to rational inquiry” (Regan 1983, xii).

A fair number of critics, after and long before Carol Gilligan, have said that such faith in the rational and universal force of principles at the expense of our emotional responses is naive, based on an insensitivity to our actual moral psychology and a Western and perhaps masculinist contempt for our emotions, which are considered “womanish.” Critics have shown how this rationalist ideal fails to account for what motivates us in many of our personal relations, where love, or friendship, or the affections, for example, often are, and should be, a (or the) predominant motive.<sup>13</sup> Singer and Regan follow the tradition that polarizes reason and the emotions and that privileges reason when the two conflict.

There is no pat formula for deciding when our affective responses have a place, or how much weight they should have, in resolving dilemmas affecting either personal or public relations. For the most part, deciding when and to what extent our affective responses are appropriate and helpful involves entering into a particular narrative. Probably there are situations, even involving personal relations, that call for the use of some maxim that is impartial and dispassioned. Apportioning family goods, services, or energy among rivaling children might be an example. And certainly we sometimes do and should be allowed to respond affectively to strangers. We feel what might be an empathetic sympathy and embarrassment when we witness, for example, someone else’s public humiliation or a parent pleading on television for the return of a missing child.

Marti Kheel (1985) has said that the argument Singer and Regan make from “marginal cases” relies on an emotional appeal. The argument holds that we either revoke the moral standing of “defective” human beings or else grant standing to those animals that are intellectually and emotionally on par with these humans. Since we have some very strong feelings or intuitions about the humans the argument is persuasive: we are willing to accord moral status to animals rather than deny it to the humans.

What Kheel advocates, along with Mary Midgley, Sara Ruddick, and Robin Morgan, is what Morgan calls a “unified sensibility,” or a recognition of the “fusion of feeling and thought” as characteristic of moral life (Kheel 1985, 144). Karen Warren (1990) is advocating something similar when she says that an ecofeminist ethic will emerge out of individuals’ concrete relationships and



experiences and will recognize a variety of affective responses along with formal and abstract principles, all in their appropriate contexts.

Kheel and Warren suggest that whenever possible we must "*experience* the full impact of our moral decisions," especially of those decisions that we make daily and so casually and that have such an enormous impact on the rest of sentient life (Kheel 1985, 145). This implies that those individuals who believe that flesh eating is morally permissible or even morally neutral should visit chickens who are confined along with three to six other chickens in a cage the size of a record album cover in a battery shed that holds up to 10,000 other chickens. They should see bobby calves tethered in veal sheds and cows on the killing floor and witness a sow's confinement in the "iron maiden."<sup>14</sup> Those who condone animal research and testing should request a tour of laboratories at the nearest research university. They should see the equipment—the surgical tables, restraining chairs, "rape racks," and "guillotines"—and experience the smells and the sounds.<sup>15</sup>

Will these individuals still think and feel the same about such practices? I am not saying that moral disagreement will disappear when we expand the range of experiences or responses that enrich our moral lives. But I do agree with those who emphasize the importance of direct experience for making responsible choices *and* for articulating desperately needed new moral visions, particularly in animal and environmental ethics.

### III.

In this section I begin to give the research issue the kind of contextual attention that Singer and Regan fail to give it. This needs to be done before we can assess the role of abstract principles, including Singer's and Regan's principles, and of the affections in resolving the issue. In the course of recontextualizing the issue, I examine it holistically and explore several related ecofeminist themes.

I limit the focus of my discussion to the use of animals in biomedical research. I do *not* attempt to justify the use of animals in any such studies. In fact, I am sympathetic with Singer's and Regan's repugnance over using animals as research tools, even though I disagree with their arguments. What I have to say here has some special bearing on feminist critiques of androcentric science and on recent attempts to articulate "feminine" and especially feminist alternatives. If, as ecofeminists say, naturism is something that feminists should condemn and always avoid in their own work, then the use of 20 million research animals annually in this country deserves more attention in this feminist literature than it has received.<sup>16</sup>

The few ecofeminists who have written in any depth about animal research (Kheel 1985; Collard 1988; Adams 1990) insist that we examine the issues contextually and holistically. Only then can we make knowledgeable and

responsible decisions, in the rich sense of weighing facts, theoretical knowledge, and our affections. In this spirit, then, we should consider the many well-documented studies that demonstrate: (1) how animals are grossly over-used and misused in research that is trivial, duplicative to the point of redundancy, badly designed, or that fails to use existing nonanimal alternatives or to develop them;<sup>17</sup> (2) how many researchers use species with more demanding psycho-social needs when those with less demanding needs will do; (3) how animals often do not serve as reliable models for human beings and how it can be very dangerous to extrapolate from results obtained from one species to another;<sup>18</sup> and (4) how federal and in-house regulations that are supposed to protect laboratory animals are grossly inadequate and how regulatory agencies are extremely lax in enforcing the few regulations that do exist.

In addition, as a variety of activists and ecofeminists have said, our society, including the medical establishment, needs to insist on such *proactive* measures as cleaning our air, water, soil, and the poisons from our grocery shelves if we are serious about our physical and psychological well-being. Americans see precious little of that from the National Institutes of Health, the world's largest funder of reactive animal research, or from the American Medical Association. And of course we are unlikely to see a preventative emphasis from these institutions, as feminists writing about science (e.g., Harding 1986), women's health care (e.g., Corea 1988), and technology (e.g., Merchant 1980; Collard 1988) have pointed out. As Collard puts it, these institutions use a strategy "typical of patriarchal control . . . whereby the integrity of matter (living and nonliving) is broken, artificially restored/recombined, and marketed in such a way (cure, improvement, etc.) as to elicit gratitude" (Collard 1988, 79). Animal research is a part of the strategy, and animals are among its subjects, along with women, whose natural lives have been "enhanced" by these "helping" institutions in everything from our pregnancies to our breast size.

These mostly methodological considerations certainly are not lost on Singer and Regan, but they are superfluous to what Regan calls the "moral heart of the matter" (Regan 1983, 384): the conflict between human and animal interests and our unjustified willingness to sacrifice the latter for the former. But for many thoughtful people the question of *whether* animals should be used in research is more pertinently one of *when* they should be used and *how* they will be treated, just as, to make some very imperfect comparisons, for many people the question of whether euthanasia is morally permissible is also a question of how and when it is performed, and for some, the question of "just" war is not so much a question of whether it is justifiable but of how and when. I am not claiming here that these three practices—euthanasia, "just" war, and animal research—are analogous; they are, in fact, significantly disanalogous. Instead, my point is that many people will consider any characterization of these issues that leaves out information about methodology and other contex-

tual features to be decontextualized to the point of being misleading, even irrelevant.

How, exactly, do Singer and Regan themselves resolve this “moral heart of the matter”? In his chapter on research Regan advocates the total abolition of the use of animals in research, even granting, as he puts it, “that we face greater *prima facie* harm than laboratory animals presently endure if future harmful research on these animals is stopped, and even granting that the number of humans and other animals who stand to benefit from allowing this practice to continue exceeds the number of animals used in it” (Regan 1983, 389).

But in his discussion of biomedical research, Regan also makes a distinction between “exceptional” sacrifice and “routine” or “institutionalized” sacrifice of animal life. And he says that any judgments we make about the former (lifeboat cases, for example) are not transferable to the latter (the routine and prevalent use of animals in research, for example); but he does *not* condemn the former, nonroutine sacrifice. This is a suggestive but much underdeveloped point. If Regan is saying that the nonroutine use of some animals might be justified in desperate times in extreme situations, then we will most certainly have to muck around in the contextual particulars to sort these cases out. Most of all, we will want to know what constitutes “nonroutine” use, that is, how many animals may be used with what frequency and for what. And I expect that there will be no pat formula for deciding this, that we will have to sort this out on a case-by-case basis.

Singer resorts to an argument that appears frequently in the literature. I call it the onus argument. His version of it follows:

So whenever an experimenter claims that his experiment is important enough to justify the use of an animal, we should ask him whether he would be prepared to use a retarded human at a similar mental level to the animal he is planning to use. (Singer 1977, 67)

Singer does *not* advocate using human beings as research subjects. He is making a point about consistency: an experimenter cannot consistently condone the use of an animal while condemning the use of a human being when each will suffer roughly the same. Singer is basically correct when he says that the research community bears the onus of justifying its use of animals, even when it is clear that some significant benefits could come of it. But there is also an onus on the rights community to justify their abolitionist stance, to justify *not* using animals, especially when we stand to lose some significant future benefits. Singer’s response to that onus is to lead us into a utilitarian impasse. Arguing that there are no defensible grounds on which to base a choice does not make the problem go away. Oddly, Singer considers this impasse a kind of victory. I think that he has reached something more like a dead end, that this impasse is an indication that utilitarianism, at least in itself, is unable to resolve this

problem. Utilitarianism might even *be* the problem; an impartial or misleading characterization of an issue can make it seem obdurate, unresolvable.

Recently, ecofeminist Ynestra King (1987) took to task a certain "Malthusian wing" of deep ecologists for their shallow analyses of the political and social causes of such environmental problems as global over-population and for the impracticality and bureaucratic heartlessness of their proposed solutions. I feel a similar frustration with the shallow utilitarian analysis of the research issue that leads to Singer's impasse, with the impracticality of the impasse itself as some sort of proposed resolution, and with Singer's and Regan's assumptions that our allegiance to principled demands will and should cut cleanly through any preexisting emotional or other bonds we might have to members of our own species, community, friends, family, or lovers who may suffer as a result of Singer's and Regan's recommendations.<sup>19</sup> My point is *not* to justify any and all of these bonds as automatic trumps against animals' sufferings. Rather than say that these bonds should count for nothing (as the animal rights literature suggests) or that they count for everything (as the research community suggests), I have been trying to show all along that there are numerous relevant issues that are neglected by both sides, including this one, and there may well be more than just two sides.

The following are among some of the more significant issues neglected by mainstream writers on animal research. I only gesture at them here and hope that they receive more attention in the future. First, can we justify sacrificing beings who are extremely vulnerable to the whims and powers of human beings? How do we justify sacrificing beings who are "innocent," that is, who are neither actually nor potentially culpable or even capable of any wrongdoing? We all seem to recognize some fairly stringent moral prohibitions against taking advantage of the innocent and the vulnerable, *even* in cases of self-defense, even in lifeboat cases. In fact, taking such advantage is often seen as especially malign. Do animals fall outside the scope of this prohibition completely, and if so, why? If not, why not? And if sometimes, then when and why?

Andrée Collard (1988) suggests that along with the self-serving appropriation of animals for the ostensive purpose of advancing human health, there is also a familiar attitude that "might makes right" with regard to the capture, breeding, genetic engineering, use and disposal of research animals. Every feminist knows that women have been and are affected by this form of arrogance in science, in the streets, in our own bedrooms and elsewhere. To condone such an attitude and practice in any context is to perpetuate it in all. Ynestra King puts this basic ecofeminist thesis forcefully when she says that "the hatred of women and the hatred of nature are intimately connected and mutually reinforcing" (King 1989, 18).

Furthermore, one popular nineteenth-century antivivisectionist argument, advanced by George Bernard Shaw, among others, held that the appropriation of unwilling and unwitting subjects for research that is painful and deadly

erodes any aspirations or pretensions we might have about living in a “civilized” society, about possessing a “civilized” character. Ecofeminists have made similar points with regard to the arrogant and violent appropriation of non-human nature and women, particularly by American and Anglo-European cultures. Collard says that we live in a society “dominated by the ‘ideology of cultural sadism,’” one in which “violent acts are neutralized by virtue of being so common. In the case of animal experimentation, these acts are admired (published and replicated) and the actors honored (tenured and funded)” (Collard 1988, 68). The same culture that at best is apathetic about and at worst valorizes the deaths of 20 million research animals in U.S. laboratories annually also allowed the country’s 750,000 *reported* rapes during the 1980s, the murder of 50,000 women by their male partners, and the hospitalization of more women from beatings by their male partners than from auto accidents during that decade.<sup>20</sup> All this seems at least *prima facie* evidence that acts of violence against women have been similarly neutralized.

As a final consideration, we might also examine the affective schizophrenia of a country that spends more money than any other in the world on its “pets,” while spending more than any other on animal research, much of it involving the use of cats and dogs, hamsters and bunnies. How and why do we circumscribe our collective and individual imaginations in this manner? Certainly whatever is going on here is complicated and beyond the scope of this paper. But our reasons for such seemingly arbitrary circumscription must include such obvious things as consumer convenience and the research and testing industry’s secrecy about and, more recently, outright denial of the violence of so-called routine testing and research. Do we want to condone whatever sophisticated emotional bracketing is at work here? I should hope not. To do so is to give up any significant account of collective and individual moral responsibility regarding, as I have said before, the impact on the rest of sentient life of some of our most routine and intimate practices (e.g., what we eat) and consumer purchases (e.g., the dish soap we buy).

Surely we will not and probably cannot have the same affections or degrees of affection for the cat or dog in the laboratory that we have for the animals in our households, nor can we have the same feeling for a stranger’s lost or abused child that we would have for our own child in a similar situation. These special ties *do* bind, and I am not recommending that we bracket them for the sake of blind impartiality, at least not always. While we cannot feel or care the *same* for every human being or animal, the feeling or caring that we do have for our immediate companions should extend some, via imagination and empathy, to our feeling for, our caring about, the plight of more extended others. And for those who have a rich enough moral imagination, this regard will cross species boundaries. Someone who has cared about a rock or a tree or a dog or a cat may well care about what happens to, and particularly about the destruction of, other rocks, trees, cats, and dogs. Such particular relationships

can and should enhance one's capacity to empathize, "feel with," and act on behalf of others.

I am not saying that everyone who cares about laboratory animals will condemn experimentation. I am saying that we will at least cease to condone the practice so cavalierly. We will find that there are certain elements of moral tragedy in having to make some choices despite the daunting complexity of these situations, despite having few, if any, principles or precedents to guide us, despite having little or no assurance that we have chosen rightly. And regardless of how we choose, we may have to live with, as some have recently put it, irresolute, nagging "moral remainders."<sup>21</sup>

#### IV.

I am convinced that as feminist theorists and practitioners we must address the interconnecting dominations of women, animals, and nonsentient nature, as ecofeminists insist, along with other social dominations, in order to understand sufficiently and correct any one and all of them. Ecofeminist analyses include those facets of patriarchal domination that are often neglected by other feminists, by environmental ethicists, *and* by animal rights proponents. I realize that I have made very few recommendations about when, if ever, we may use animals in research, although I have made my general antipathy toward such use clear. Nonetheless, and this may be obvious, I still feel some ambivalence over this issue, a gut sense that my antipathy is appropriate but that its grounds are not yet well enough articulated. I hope to inspire other feminist voices to help articulate these grounds and to do so in a way that avoids simplistic characterizations in terms of daughters and dogs.

#### NOTES

Many thanks to the *Hypatia* referees, Tony Crunk, and especially Karen Warren for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. I also gratefully acknowledge Cora Diamond's influence on my thinking about these issues.

1. Tom Regan (1983, 400) cites this passage from Mill.

2. Cora Diamond (1978) also uses the term "Singer-Regan approach." My characterization of the approach shares certain features with hers, but our characterizations are not the same.

3. I use the popular term "animal rights" to refer to political and philosophical debates over the moral status of mostly domestic, agricultural, and laboratory animals. I do not argue anywhere that animals have moral or legal rights.

4. Regan includes mammalian animals, one year and older, who are not psychologically impaired under the jurisdiction of this principle because, he says, we can be assured that these animals have preference interests. He also says that his is a "minimal" case,

which means that he does not rule out the possibility of nonmammals and of mammals younger than one year having preference interests.

5. See especially Kittay and Meyers (1987).

6. For example, Singer (1979) says that we may eat "humanely" raised and slaughtered chickens and ducks because, he claims, they probably have no interests in their future; in fact, they probably have no notion of a "future" whatsoever, he says. Regan (1983), who wants to give ducks and chickens and other nonmammals, as well as mammals younger than one year, the "benefit of the doubt," does say that it is permissible to sacrifice fetal mammals and nonmammals in their early stages of development because they do not possess interests.

7. Deep ecologists eschew "shallow" ecologists' anthropocentric philosophies. A major tenet of the deep ecology movement is, as Arne Naess puts it, "the well-being of nonhuman life on Earth has a value in itself. This value is independent of any instrumental usefulness for limited human purposes" (Naess 1984, 266; see also Naess 1973).

8. "The problem is not simply *that* value-hierarchical thinking and value dualisms are used, but *the way* each has been used in *oppressive conceptual frameworks* to establish inferiority and to justify subordination" (Warren 1990, 128-29).

9. Both Singer (1977, 21-22) and Regan (1983, 324) make a distinction between the value of a "normal" human life and that of an animal, and each say the human life is the more valuable.

10. See Susan Griffin (1978) and Carol Adams (1990).

11. See Jim Cheney (1987, 1989) and Karen Warren (1990).

12. See especially Murdoch (1970), Gilligan (1982), Noddings (1984), Ruddick (1980).

13. See Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984).

14. The "iron maiden" is used to confine a sow's movements after she delivers her litter. This is manufacturers' and breeders' slang for this device.

15. A "rape rack" immobilizes primates as they are impregnated (Benney 1983).

16. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and researchers currently say that 20 million animals are used annually for research in the United States. This figure may well be low because institutions are not required to report the use of mice and rats (80% of the animals used in research), and farm animals. Animal rights groups put the annual figure at 40-60 million.

17. Standards in the Animal Welfare Act that are supposed to define and control "trivial" experimentation and minimize redundancy are enforced by an institution's Animal Care and Use Committee, an in-house committee which generally consists of researchers and individuals friendly to animal research. Decisions about the numbers and types of animals used in an experiment and about whether to withhold pain medication are also left to the discretion of this in-house committee. I highly recommend the studies by the United Action for Animals, 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017 on duplication and redundancy.

18. Thalidomide was tested on several nonhuman animal species before being given to human beings. Insulin deforms mice and rabbits. Penicillin is toxic to guinea pigs.

19. Mary Midgley (1983) has made a very similar point.

20. These figures are cited in "Hate Crimes Bill Excludes Women," in *off our backs* 20, no. 6 (June 1990).

21. " 'Moral remainders' refers to some genuine moral demands which, because their fulfillment conflicted with other genuine moral demands, are 'left over' in episodes of moral choice, and yet are not nullified" (Walker 1989, 21).

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